

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 640

By Wilder

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Betty Littlefield Blanton of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Betty Littlefield Blanton, a former First Lady of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, an energetic champion of many charitable and civic causes, Mrs. Blanton was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Betty Blanton was born in Portageville, Missouri, to the late Henry Earl and Maxie Pearl Pettigrew Littlefield, and moved with her family to Adamsville, Tennessee, at a very young age; and

WHEREAS, she graduated from high school in Adamsville and attended Draughon's Business College in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, she married the late Governor Ray Blanton, a schoolteacher with family interests in road building; Betty Blanton was at his side through numerous political campaigns as he successfully rose from state legislator to three-term congressman to Governor of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Betty Blanton was an active first lady who became involved in fund-raising events for the Tennessee School for the Deaf, in hosting international exchanges, and in overseeing the State's U.S. Bicentennial celebration; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, she provided outstanding leadership for the Tennessee Conference for Women in Business, which attracted nearly 1,000 women from across Tennessee; the conference conducted seminars on a wide range of topics and attracted national presenters, including White House staffer Liz Carpenter, and actress Polly Bergen; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Blanton was a gracious and untiring hostess to dignitaries visiting the State, hosting events related to the historic United Nations Visit to Tennessee in 1976 as well as

hosting several heads of state, governors, and President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalyn Carter; and

WHEREAS, after Governor Blanton left office, Betty Blanton served with acumen and alacrity in various positions, ranging from operating a video store in Brentwood to overseeing events for the Tennessee Department of Labor and working in the State Treasurer's Office; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, Mrs. Blanton became involved in efforts to renovate and restore the state's executive residence; and

WHEREAS, Betty Blanton was an active and devout member of the Bellevue United Methodist Church, which she served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, she was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Blanton is survived by a daughter, Deborah Flack; two sons, David Ray Blanton and his wife Angela and Paul Derek Blanton; and four grandchildren, Amy Flack Philbrick, Jonathan Flack, Matthew Blanton, and Adam Blanton; and

WHEREAS, Betty Blanton leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exemplary public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory Betty Littlefield Blanton, a former First Lady of Tennessee, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Blanton.